THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JANARDHAN POOJARI): (a) The amount of foreign exchange released for the import of these commodities during the period 1st January 1985 to 31st January. 1986 is indicated below:-

(Rs. crores)

	Amount of foreign exchange released	
	January Dec.1985	January 1986
Sugar	453·5	150 0
Fertilizers	1483·5	Nil
Fertilizers raw materials		
(1) Sulphur	294·5	..
(2) Raw- phosphate	171·8	..

(b) These imports became necessary for bridging the gap between demand and indigenous availability.

(c) The balance of trade position reflects the increase or decrease in imports and exports of various commodities and to this extent, would be affected by the imports of fertilizers and sugar referred to in (a) and (b) above.

Return of tobacco

957. SHRI R. SAMBASIVA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the per acre return of production of tobacco that the farmers get at present;

(b) whether it is a fact that the return is very low in comparison to that which the farmers of other countries get: and

(c) if so, what measures the Central Government propose to take to enhance the return of tobacco growers in the country?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI P. SHIV SHANKER): (a) The average yield of Tobacco in India is estimated at around 1100 kg. per hactare.

(b) Yes, Sir. The yield is low due to low productivity and poor quality of tobacco produced as compared to other compating countries.

(c) The Tobacco Board is implementing various technical programmes like Varietal Trials, Integrated Pest Management, Topping and Desuckering, and is taking other steps like supply of various inputs, improved cultural practices etc. in collaboration with State Governments and other agencies like the Directorate of Tobacco Development and Central Tobacco Research Institute to increase production. Simultaneously, efforts are under way to evolve varieties capable of giving appreciable increases in the average farmer's holdings. Auction System has been introduced in the States of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh for the sale of Virginia Flue-cured Tobacco to ensure remunerative prices to the growers.

Accidents in mines

958. SHRI KALPNATH RAI:
SHRI J. P. GOYAL:

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) what is the number of accidents in mines during 1985 resulting in deaths and injuries to mine workers; and

(b) whether any new rules and regulations have been formulated to ensure the safety of mine workers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI P. A. SANGMA): (a) and (b) The number of accidents which took place